



LILLOOET AREA LIBRARY ASSOCIATION 2018 PROVINCIAL LIBRARIES BRANCH REPORT

INTRODUCTION

The Lillooet Area Library Association provides library services to residents of the District of Lillooet, Squamish Lillooet Regional District (SLRD) Areas A and B, and the six Northern St'át'imc communities T'ít'q'et, Ts'al'áh, Se'k'elwas, Xwisten, Xaxli'p and Ts'kw'áylaxw.

We operate three branches; in Lillooet, Gold Bridge and Shalalth (Ts'al'áh) at the Bridge River Town Site. We also provide outreach services to communities without a branch.

The Lillooet branch is part of a community hub in the Recreation, Education and Cultural (REC) Centre. The Gold Bridge branch is housed with the post office, next door to the school, and helps form the town center. The Bridge River branch in Ts'al'ah is central to the newly developed BC Hydro housing complex, but much of the local population is spread out over a large area with multiple community sites.

The town of Lillooet is the service center for a remote rural area. The population of the town itself was 2275 in 2016. There are 1757 people living in scattered communities and isolated homesteads throughout the 7,474 square kilometer region that surrounds Lillooet.

This is St'át'imc Territory. The St'át'imc people compose approximately 50% of the population. The Lillooet Tribal Council, St'át'imc Government Services and the Band Councils of the six communities are important local government bodies.

The Lillooet area economy continues to rely on forestry. Upgrades to the Bridge River power system will bring new B.C. Hydro workers to the area and increase opportunities for local people in support services. Public sector employment constitutes significant portion of the higher paying jobs. Local initiatives are promoting growth in the agriculture and tourism sectors.

Economic Hardship indicators continue to rank the Lillooet area as one of the poorest, least educated and at risk in the province.

During 2018 the LALA team did a lot of “foundational” work. These efforts do not “demonstrate impact” in themselves, they set the stage to increase our effectiveness. As the definition of Library service expands, we are listening to our patrons and taking the time to ensure we meet the needs of our communities.

In September of 2018 LALA conducted a review of our Strategic Plan. This day-long event brought together Board, Staff and community members. Together we reviewed our successes and challenges and looked to the new opportunities ahead. We developed operational actions to bring us into 2020.

Staffing challenges at both the Lillooet and Bridge River Branches required a lot of energy and attention in 2018. Finding and retaining staff is a significant challenge for our organization. We can offer only part-time positions but require people to possess high levels of skills and

knowledge. The issues we dealt with during 2018 have prioritized action on; staff competency reviews, training plan reviews with all staff, and succession planning for all branches.

LALA STRATEGIC GOALS AND OUTCOMES IN RELATION TO PROVINCIAL PRIORITIES

Provincial Priority 1. Fostering Connected Communities: *advancing access to information and resources.*

LALA Goals that support the priority:

We will be a center for access to new information technology.

Action:

2018: *Determine hardware and software requirements for a creative or maker space.*

- At the end of 2018 the Lillooet Area Library Association invested in an IT Assessment from the B.C. Libraries Coop. BCLC staff did a field trip, visiting all three branches. At each site network, hardware and software capacities were examined. The report provides a wide range of recommendations and offers an invaluable road map for future development of our IT resources.

2018: *We will have trained staff to help patrons with IT use.*

- In 2018 LALA purchased a license for Lynda.com. Uptake has been disappointing with only 45 active users and 11 completions for the year. However, many community members, and all the active users have commented on the value of this resource and thanked us for making it available. We have decided to purchase another year with plans of increasing promotion to the public and providing staff hours for training.
- BCLC IT Assessment addresses training requirements, and makes recommendations for assessing staff skills, professional development and training resources.

Provincial Priority 2. Building Capacity: *enabling inspiration and innovation.*

LALA Goals that support the priority:

We will provide even more inclusive, free, friendly, flexible, accessible, safe, open and comfortable space for all community members and tourists.

Action: *Make Bridge River Library accessible for community members and tourists*

2018: *Change schedule to meet community needs. Develop partnerships to address barriers at Bridge River Library*

- At the request of several community members we changed the open day at the Bridge River Library to Wednesday. This meets the needs of temporary residents who are working for B.C. Hydro. Use of the local collection and InterLibrary Connect remain steady, with some modest increases. 22 new card holders were registered in 2018, most for temporary workers, but almost half were from the population of 276 permanent residents. During the 2018 Strategic Planning session many ideas were generated to increase use of the Library. The first action, providing home delivery service to housebound patrons has been greeted with enthusiasm, with four people using the service within weeks of it being offered.

- **Action:** *Reconfigure or build at Lillooet Branch for a quiet study space, effective storeroom etc.*
- In May of 2018 a room became available for rent in the Lillooet REC Centre. LALA staff quickly realized that the additional 850 square feet could solve our space problems. In the process of securing the room we learned that we did not possess permissions from the Minister of Education for our lease required under the Library Act. With assistance from staff at the Libraries Branch LALA, made the request. Permission to sign a five-year lease, included the new room was granted in November 2018.
 - While these legal details were worked out we rented Room 203 on a monthly basis. Already this room has hosted 130 Adult Literacy tutoring sessions. It provided a cool sanctuary from the smoke for 19 Summer Reading Club sessions. It was a beautiful space to hold our Strategic Planning meeting with ample room for our entire team. We have been approached by the Lillooet Friendship Centre Society and the Infant Development Program to partner with them to offer programming.

Provincial Priority 3. Working Together: *creating lasting and sustainable partnerships.*

LALA Goals that support the priority:

We will enjoy a renewed/-enhanced relationship with St’át’imc Communities.

Action: *Develop formal relationship with St’át’imc governing bodies for library service extension.*

2018: *Work with Lillooet Tribal Council (LTC) and individual bands to develop service plans.*

- Helen Copeland, LTC Education Coordinator invited the Library Director to give presentation to the St’át’imc Education Authority. The 20-minute presentation was delivered to four of the six local St’át’imc Education Coordinators. They all expressed surprise at the breadth of free resources available through the Library. Afterwards they told their coordinator that they have a deeper understanding of the role the Library can play in educational services, and the wide variety of ways we are already serving St’át’imc community members.

Action: *Partner with local agencies to improve outreach programs.*

- Partnered with the Empowering Indigenous Women’s Leadership Council to host the “Moon Series” with Okanagan Elder Mollie Bono. Four evenings of experiential learning were offered. Participants learned about cultural teachings related to points of transition in the lives of women, the changes that have occurred in Interior Salish cultures since contact and how the process of colonization has impacted Indigenous people. 40 people attended. The impact on participants was profound; “I enjoyed the workshop, it opened my eyes wider. It gave me strength and confidence. Kukstumkacw.” “I think it is so important to have this kind of conversation. As a white woman, this helped me better understand the St’át’imc culture and how it evolved post contact. I also have a better understanding of certain traditions and how to participate respectfully.”

Provincial Priority 4. Sustaining Our Success: *enhancing governance and demonstrating impact.*

LALA Goals that support the priority:

We will increase effective services and programming and eliminate waste.

Action: Partner with local agencies to improve outreach programs.

2018 Action: Identify and deliver joint programs that can assist clients from other agencies and groups.

- LALA partnered with the Lillooet Regional Invasive Species Society (LRISS) to host the “At the Table” Event. The goal of the event was to bring the non-profit sector together to evaluate our health, find ways to address common problems, and provide a space for informal networking. The gathering brought together 56 representatives from 48 non-profit organizations and volunteer groups. Participants were led through a series of discussions and activities. The process identified challenges and solutions. The participants then voted on solutions that they thought should be implemented. Information gathered at the event made it clear that participants want to work toward greater cooperation and communication. The first implementation action is the formation of a Community Coordinator. LALA is working with the Squamish Lillooet Regional District, the Lillooet Chamber of Commerce and LRISS to establish funding and oversight for the position. The Community Coordinator will provide grant writing support; organize capacity building workshops on topics such as Board governance, finance etc.; help groups network by attending board meetings and sharing information and develop volunteer recruitment strategies with a focus on involving younger people in the non-profit sector.
- Successful application to the Northern Development Initiative Trust to run a pilot Community Adult Learning Centre. The Lillooet Tribal Council led the application, with support from the District of Lillooet, Thompson Rivers University, the Open Door Group, Aboriginal Skills, Employment and Training Strategy and the Lillooet Area Library Association. LALA donated funds from the Literacy Outreach Coordination implementation funding (Decoda) to provide interim funding and seed money to leverage further funds. A cohort of twelve adult students is working toward a variety of educational goals, most hoping to achieve an GED. Other clients have accessed support services for courses they are taking through Open Learning. The impact on participants in this program has been significant; with high levels of support and a flexible learning environment all members of the cohort are reaching their educational goals. The community partnerships are ongoing to secure long-term funding for this initiative.

2018 Action: decision to increase leased space at Lillooet REC Centre

- The decision to take on increased costs and a five-year lease with the District of Lillooet required detailed cash flow and budget analysis. It was obvious immediately that the room could be renovated to perfectly meet our varied needs, but could we afford this expansion? LALA staff worked with the Finance Committee to establish a plan to spend down our operational surplus and commit to developing this new part of the Public Library.

CONCLUSION

Funding from the Ministry of Education Libraries Branch represents 11.59% of LALA's annual budget. These funds are included in general operational funds; they are core funding that has an impact on all aspects of our work.

This has been a year of big changes for the Lillooet Area Library Association. Our main branch has expanded into a new space that will enable us to diversify the range of materials we lend, and the programs we offer.

With help from the United Way Thompson Nicola Community Fund we have hired a Volunteer Coordinator who is building policy and procedure and helping us get a volunteer program off the ground.

Shelia Simpson was our Library Director from 1992 to 2011. This year she retired completely, leaving her role as contractor for Collections Development, which she had held since 2012. Her wisdom and vision have helped build a vital and vibrant collection. A recent visitor from the Lower Mainland commented "you have such incredible books here!" and it is true. In 2018 books from our collection were lent to patrons in New Brunswick, Ottawa and all over B.C.